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STABILITY OF THE SOVIET SATELLITE STRUCTURE

(Advance Conclusions)

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 19 February 1957. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

19 February 1957

SUBJECT: NIE 12-57: STABILITY OF THE SOVIET SATELLITE STRUCTURE

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the prospects for stability in the Soviet
Satellite structure over the next few years.

CONCLUSIONS

A. The long-latent conflict between Soviet interests and
Satellite aspirations exploded into crisis last fall as a re-
sult of the progressive weakening of ideological authority and
loosening of police controls following the death of Stalin.
The Soviet leaders are experiencing great difficulty in formu-
lating and putting into effect policies which will reduce this
crisis to manageable proportions. (Paras. 2,6)

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B. We believe that the USSR will continue to regard the Satellite area as vital to its interests, and will not seriously entertain, ^{at least for the next several years,} the possibility of a general political or military withdrawal, even in return for a withdrawal of US forces from Europe. To the Soviet leaders, loss of control over Eastern Europe would constitute a severe setback for Communism. They would also view it as rendering them powerless to prevent German reunification, and as seriously impairing the USSR's strategic position. (Paras. 5, 21)

C. We believe that the Soviet leaders have concluded from the events of recent months that although reforms in certain fields were acceptable, concessions to nationalist pressures involve hazards to Soviet control. They apparently intend for some time to come to put primary emphasis on the internal security of the Satellite regimes and on Soviet control over them. (Para 23)

D. Poland's success in maintaining its present limited degree of independence is a key factor affecting the future political developments in Eastern Europe. Should the USSR succeed in reimposing its complete control over Poland, it could more easily check dissident elements in other Satellites, particularly disruptive forces in the other Satellite Communist parties. If the USSR does not achieve its aim in Poland, its problems elsewhere will probably worsen. (Para. 43)

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E. We believe that the Soviet leaders will try to undermine the special status which the Gomulka regime in Poland has acquired. However, the costs and risks of a military intervention would be great. Such action would almost certainly be resisted by the bulk of the Polish nation and armed forces, and thus involve Soviet forces in large-scale military operations, which could spread to East Germany and could provoke a major international crisis. (Paras. 26, 27)

F. Soviet success in repairing its losses in Poland, however, would not remove the underlying causes of disaffection throughout the Satellites. Tensions between the Satellite populations and their regimes during the next several years probably will be higher than prior to the events in Poland and Hungary, and the unity of Satellite parties will be subjected to greater strains. Soviet policy is not likely to reduce these tensions in Eastern Europe, or even to restore the degree of acquiescence prevailing earlier. (Paras. 41-43)

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